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IRRIGATION

REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED BY THE

IRRIGATION CONVENTION

HELD IN THE

CITY OF CALGARY

ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

MARCH 8 AND 9, 1894

PUBLISHED BY THE

*SOUTHWESTERN IRRIGATION LEAGUE OF
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES*

HERALD PRINT

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PREFACE.

A convention was held in Calgary on the 8th and 9th March, 1894, to consider, generally, the question of irrigation as affecting the central and southern portions of the District of Alberta and similar portions of the District of Assiniboia, and to discuss, particularly, the legislation concerning irrigation in the Northwest Territories proposed to be introduced by the Dominion Government at the present session of Parliament. The convention assembled on the joint invitation of the Calgary Agricultural Society and the Mayor and Council of the city of Calgary. Representatives were present from the city of Calgary, from the towns of Lethbridge and Macleod, and from most of the rural settlements of central and southern Alberta. Several papers were read in relation to the different aspects of the irrigation question, and the subject was very fully discussed. This publication contains the more important of the reports of committees and of the resolutions which were submitted to and adopted by the convention, which the undersigned certify as being correct copies from the convention's official records.

WESLEY F. ORR,

Chairman of Convention.

Calgary, Alberta, 28th March. 1894.

FRANCIS H. TURNOCK,

Secretary of Convention

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REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

ON PERMANENT ORGANIZATION.

Your Committee appointed on Permanent Organization beg leave to report as follows :—

That all persons interested in irrigation in central and southern Alberta and Western Assiniboia, be invited to unite in forming an Irrigation League which said league shall be called "The South-Western Irrigation League, of the North-West Territories," with branch councils at all places where ten or more members have been secured.

The executive of each Branch Council shall consist of President, Secretary-treasurer and three members, who shall be elected by the Branch.

There shall be a Central Council with headquarters at the city of Calgary, said Council to consist of President, Secretary-treasurer and six electoral members, who shall be elected at a General Convention of the League and hold office until the next General Convention. In addition to the above the Senators and Members of Parliament for Alberta and Western Assiniboia and the Members of the Legislative Assembly for Calgary, Banff, Lethbridge, Macleod and Medicine Hat ; the Mayors of the city of Calgary and the towns of Lethbridge and Macleod ; the Presidents of all Agricultural Societies and Boards of Trade in central and southern Alberta and Western Assiniboia and the officers of all Branch Councils shall be ex-officio members of the Central Council. Each General Convention shall designate where the next General Convention shall be held.

Your Committee would suggest that Hon. Senator Lougheed, Messrs Bone, Lucas, Reilly, Turnock, Walker, Marsh, H. B.

Alexander and R. G. Robinson be the first elected members of the said Central Council.

That all delegates attending this convention should, on returning home, at once proceed to organize and report to the Central Council

That each member of the League shall pay an annual fee of one dollar, of which such part as shall be fixed by the constitution of said League be remitted to the Central Council.

That said Central Council shall forthwith draft a constitution for the League.

Your Committee would further suggest the advisability of sending delegates to Ottawa from the different districts to present and to urge upon the Government the resolutions passed by the convention.

* * * * *

ON THE PROMOTION OF IRRIGATION.

Your Committee on the Promotion of Irrigation beg leave to present the following report :—

1. Your Committee consider that it is advisable to have enacted a general Irrigation Act, providing for the protection of the water rights of the district and preventing any monopolizing of the same.

2. Your Committee consider it advisable to have enacted a law providing for the simple and cheap incorporation of irrigation districts on plan similar to present school law whereby bonds could be issued for irrigation purposes.

3. Your Committee consider in all patents issued by Government and all deeds issued by C. P. R., there should in future be a reservation of right of way for irrigation ditches similar to present railroad reservation.

4. Your Committee consider that for the proper education of the community on irrigation matters it would be advisable for the Government to start in the District of Alberta an experimental farm conducted on scientific irrigation principles.

5. Your committee consider that

Whereas, That portion of the Northwest Territories lying west of the fourth principal Meridian contains the greater portion of the land of Canada requiring extensive irrigation works ; and

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Whereas, Said territory contains sufficient water, if properly managed, to irrigate and make profitable all of such land now lying idle ; and

Whereas, It appears to be impossible to induce the Dominion Government to take a direct interest in the question of irrigation as a Government work.

Therefore your Committee consider that :

(a) It is in the interests of the settlers of the western portion of the Territories that the boundaries of Alberta should be extended eastward to the fourth principal meridian.

(b) That the district so enlarged should be created into a Province with all the powers and advantages of the other provinces of Canada.

(c) That, in addition to the financial assistance to which the Province of Alberta would be entitled under the general law, all the lands owned by the Dominion Government in said Province which require irrigation for their proper development and which are now, and will, under present conditions, remain, not only valueless as a source of revenue, but a continual source of expense to the Government, should be handed over as an asset to the Provincial Government, which, having the necessary knowledge of the country and its requirements and a direct interest in its prosperity could be called upon to utilize them for the proper promotion of irrigation and thus provide the only sure means of settling the country.

6. Your Committee consider that in order to bring the foregoing matter properly before the Dominion Government, public meetings should be held in each settled portion of the territory referred to, and resolutions passed in respect to the matters herein set forth and forwarded to the Dominion Government at once.

* * * * *

ON THE PROPOSED "NORTH-WEST IRRIGATION BILL"

The Committee appointed to revise the Northwest Irrigation Bill, copies of which have been furnished the convention by the

Dominion Government, beg to make the following suggestions and recommendations:—

Re clauses 3 and 4—Doubts being expressed whether or not, by these clauses, riparian rights in all future grants from the Crown will be done away with, the law officers of the Crown should be asked to look closely into these clauses and if such rights be not done away with, to make them so that there should be no doubt that this is their effect.

A request was made by some of the committee that the clause in the draft Act of 1893 regarding Mutual Associations be re-inserted in this Bill.

In sub-clause (a) of clause 7—After the word "headworks" the following words should be inserted: "Dams or other appliances required for the diversion or use of such water."

Clause 8—Should be amended requiring notice by mail to be served on all owners of land along the stream one mile above and below the proposed location of the headworks.

Clause 9—Should have added to it a provision to the effect that when a person is taking water out of a stream on his own land to be used wholly on the same the notices referred to in this clause may, by the consent of the Minister of the Interior, be waived.

Clause 12—Should have sub-clause (c) of clause 90, 51 Vic., chap. 29 added. Also it is suggested that probably many of the remaining sub-clauses of this section might be added with advantage. The law officers should have their attention directed to this.

Clause 13—After "injured" in the 4th line should be inserted the words "or riparian rights interfered with."

It is also suggested whether the machinery for expropriating and for assessing damages provided in the Railway Act might not be improved upon by adopting means somewhat on the lines of the expropriation clauses of the Ordinance incorporating the Calgary Water Power Co. (See Northwest Territories Ordinances for 1890.)

Clauses 17 and 29—The word "knowingly" should be inserted before "divert."

Clause 18—After "water" in the 4th line should be inserted "when the same is asked for by their consumers"; the object being that if during a wet season no water be asked, the fact of non-using shall not be considered as an abandonment.

Clause 23—Should have the following added: "The returns required by this clause may be waived by the Minister, if he see fit, in the case of a private individual supplying any water solely to himself."

Clause 33—Should have the word "fifteen" inserted in the blank.

Clause 38—Should have added thereto:—"With the exception of the question of bonding powers."

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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE.

That this Convention, consisting of representatives of the agricultural and commercial interests of Central and Southern Alberta, desires to impress upon the Dominion Government the importance of Irrigation to the portion of the Northwest Territories in question and the desirability of all action possible being taken by the Dominion Government and Parliament for the promotion thereof.

* * * * *

That the Dominion Government be memorialized to commence without delay the hydrological survey referred to in section 28 of the Irrigation Bill.

* * * * *

That the Dominion government be memorialized to without delay appoint a Commission to enquire into the whole question of irrigation, with a view to ascertaining the latest information on the subject, the scope of such enquiry to embrace, (1) The legislation affecting irrigation in all communities where it is practiced and its effect upon all classes of the community; (2) The various methods of culture by irrigation adopted in irrigating countries with the view particularly of ascertaining those most applicable to the circumstances of the portions of the Canadian Northwest requiring irrigation. (3) The various branches of irrigation engineering in force in the different irrigation communities with the view to assisting proposing irrigators in the construction of works in the Canadian Northwest; and that the reports of such Commission be published without delay for the enlightenment of those interested in the subject.

* * * * *

That the Dominion Government be memorialized to establish immediately such an irrigation farm as is referred to in section 33 of the proposed Irrigation Bill, as nearly as possible in the most central or easily accessible portion of the irrigative district, for experimental cultivation by means of the artificial application of water, for the information of those desirous of adopting this system of agriculture.

* * * * *

That the Dominion Government be memorialized to recommend to Parliament the amendment of the Dominion Lands Act with the view to providing a method of land grants and settlement duties suitable to the requirements of agricultural conditions in the portions of the Northwest Territories where the adoption of irrigation is desirable.

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS.

That in the opinion of this convention it is most desirable in the best interests of the Northwest Territories that a Statute should be passed by the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada in which it shall be enacted that from and after the passing of such Statute no person or corporation shall take, acquire, receive or become entitled to, any riparian right in any river, stream, water course, lake creek, canyon, lagoon, swamp or marsh.

* * * * *

That the Northwest Territories Act should be amended so as to give power to the Northwest Legislature to pass legislation in regard to irrigation on the lines of the present School Ordinance, or the *Rights Bill of California, and to give to irrigation districts created there—under power to assess anylands for such purpose.

* * * * *

That this Convention impresses on Parliament the necessity of adequate protection of all existing water rights in the event of applications for irrigation charters.

* * * * *

That this meeting is of the opinion that no private act should be passed by the Dominion Parliament giving to any person or corporation the right to take or use any of the waters of any creek in the District of Alberta until after a general irrigation act has been passed and sanctioned, and that the motion as amended this morning be rescinded.†

* * * * *

That the General Council of the Southwestern Irrigation League be charged with submitting to the Dominion Government the resolutions passed by this convention and that, if at all possible, it arrange for delegates to be sent to Ottawa in this connection.

* * * * *

That this convention do now adjourn to meet again at the call of the General Council of the Southwestern Irrigation League, and that its next meeting be at Medicine Hat if arrangements can be made for the holding of it there, otherwise that it be held at Macleod.

* "Wright Act."—[Ed.]

† The resolution rescinded is the one next preceding.—[Ed.]

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